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ZNR UUUUU ZZH
P 261555Z MAR 09 CCY ADX0047C5B3 MSI9391
FM AMEMBASSY CONAKRY
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3573
INFO RUEHZK/ECOWAS COLLECTIVE
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC
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RHMFISS/HQ USAFRICOM STUTTGART GE

UNCLAS CONAKRY 000187

SENSITIVE

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C O R R E C T E D COPY - ADDING SENSITIVE CAPTION
E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [ENRG](#) [ECON](#) [PGOV](#) [ASEC](#) [GV](#)
SUBJECT: REVISITING GUINEA'S POWER GENERATION CAPACITY

REF: A. 08 CONAKRY 0114
[1](#)B. 08 CONAKRY 0566

[1](#)1. (SBU) SUMMARY. A March 25 FMS visit to Conakry's central power station revealed that nothing has changed over the past year with respect to the country's looming electricity crisis. Only a quarter of the generators are even operational, but EDG (Guinean Electric Company) only runs them at night because the company does not have enough cash to buy the fuel needed to run them during daylight hours. Maintenance consists of cannibalizing parts from non-operational generators to keep the other five running. The two generators donated by Libya shortly after the coup are being used at Camp Alpha Yaya, but even if they were at the main facility, they do not have the capacity to supply much more than what would be needed for one or two apartment buildings. Increasing budget constraints suggest that the situation may get worse -- and lack of electricity has proven to be a flashpoint for civil unrest in the past. END SUMMARY.

[1](#)2. (SBU) An Embassy team headed by FMS spent the morning of March 25 touring Conakry's power generation facilities with the Assistant Director General of EDG (Guinean Electricity Company). FMS had initially visited the plant in April 2008 with Econoff (reftel), although the March 25 tour was far more extensive as it covered all five generating facilities. The Conakry Tombo plant is the country's main power generating facility, regulating the supply of electricity not only to the capital, but to the interior as well. Power generated by the country's hydroelectric dams is also controlled centrally at Tombo.

[1](#)3. (SBU) An exact count was not possible, but there looked to be about 20 generators on site, all of which were in varying stages of disintegration. The oldest generators (circa 1988) were non-operational as they had been almost completely cannibalized for parts. Other generators appeared to be intact with respect to parts, but EDG officials said they were not in working condition. EDG claimed that five generators are currently operational, but none of these were actually running during the plant visit. They did start one up during the tour, but then shut it back down as the Embassy team left the building. When asked why the generators were not running during the day, the EDG Assistant Director General initially hedged, but finally admitted that the company cannot afford the fuel required to operate them around the clock so they only run them at night.

[1](#)4. (SBU) Compared to the FMS visit a year ago, the physical condition of the plant appeared unchanged. There was no visible evidence of significant repair operations other than additional cannibalization of non-operational machinery. There were parts strewn about the floor. FMS observed one repair facility, which EDG claimed is used to fix

transformers, but no work was being done at the time of the visit.

15. (SBU) At the Mototo distribution station, EDG officials explained how the Conakry plant controls and distributes the power generated at Tombo as well as the country's four hydroelectric dams. However, EDG said that they currently operate only one hydroelectric plant during the day and all four at night. They claimed that this schedule was necessary during the dry season in order to conserve water.

16. (SBU) The Embassy team also visited the Kipe sub-station, which controls the power that goes to the Embassy as well as the neighboring Radio Television Guinean station. According to EDG, the sub-station was specifically built to supply power to these two buildings, but because the Embassy no longer purchases power from EDG, the facility is underutilized. FMS explained that the Embassy cannot take power off the grid at this point in time because the power supply line is not adequately protected. (COMMENT. OBO has a pending project to upgrade the security on the supply line. END COMMENT).

17. (SBU) FMS inquired about two new generators that were reportedly donated by Libya shortly after the December 23 coup. EDG officials said that the two 800 kva generators were donated directly to the military and are currently being used at Camp Alpha Yaya. (COMMENT. At 800 kva, the Libyan generators produce 1/14th the amount of electricity as a single Tombo generator. They would be far too small to supply power more broadly to the grid. END COMMENT).

COMMENT

18. (SBU) The bottom line is that nothing has changed over the last year with respect to Guinea's capacity to supply electricity. EDG continues to lack the financial resources necessary to even run the operational generators, let alone repair the ones that are not working. This situation may get worse in the months ahead as the national budget becomes even more constrained. Conakry's power plant was built in 1988 and with proper maintenance, should have been able to operate at full capacity for several decades. Instead, the facility is falling apart just 20 years later, even with several new generators added in 1997. The erratic supply of power to capital neighborhoods has proven to be a flashpoint for civil unrest in the past. Although the CNDD is quite popular, the electricity issue is likely to surface again at some point, especially if diminishing budget resources mean that EDG may have to cut the electricity supply at night as well as during the day. END COMMENT.
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